provide viable first referral mechanisms *i.e.* at the level of CHCs, Sub-divisional hospitals and district hospitals, to improve the health status of poor and underserved by reducing mortality, morbidity and disability and to improve efficiency in allocation and use of health resources through policy reform and institutional development.

**Resolution against two-child norm**

*299. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a meeting of the reconstituted National Commission on Population was held recently;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there was a resolution against implementation of two-child norm in the country; and

(c) if so, the reasons for implementing two-child norm by Government?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir, the first meeting of the reconstituted National Commission on Population was held on 23rd July, 2005, under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister. Though the issue of two child norm was discussed in the meeting, no resolution regarding implementation of the two-child norm in the country was adopted by the Commission. In fact, the National Population Policy, 2000, affirms the commitment of Government towards voluntary and informed choice and consent of citizens while availing reproductive health care services and continuation of target free approach in administering family planning services. The family welfare programme in India is purely voluntary in nature, which enables couples to decide the size of their family and adopt the family planning methods, best suited to them, according to their choice, without any coersion.

**Procurement in NER**

*300. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is huge leakage and diversion of Wheat and Rice meant for the Public Distribution System in most of the North-Eastern States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any decision for procuring foodgrains locally to be distributed under the public distribution system and not to bring from outside of the North Eastern States so that local farmers get good support price for their produce;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps initiated by Government to increase storage capacity in the region?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In a recent study conducted by ORG Marg, New Delhi on evaluation of Targeted Public Disribution System in the country diversion of foodgrains (wheat and rice) has been reported in most of the States. In the North Eastern States the position has been as under:—

| Name of the State | Diversion(%) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Rice | Wheat |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 64.1 | 96.2 |
| Assam | 37.2 | 100.00 |
| Manipur | 97.7 | 100.00 |
| Meghalaya | 61.3 | 100.00 |
| Mizoram | 52.6 | 100.00 |
| Nagaland | 88.6 | 100.00 |
| Sikkim | Less than 5% | 100.00 |
| Tripura | 3.8 | Neg. (Negligible) |

The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission in its Performance Evaluation of the Targeted Public Distribution System has reported foodgrains leakages in Assam at 41.68% and diversion at 12% both as percentage of BPL off-take. The PEOs study covers only Assam among the North-Eastern States.

(c) and (d) There is very little marketable surplus of foodgrains in the North-East and so no procurement of wheat and very little procurement of rice takes place in the North Eastern States. As a result, it is not possible to meet the requirement of foodgrains under the Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) from only locally procured foodgrains in the North Eastern Regions. However, Government of Assam has been requested to adopt the De-Centralised Procurement Scheme to enhance procurement of paddy/ rice in Assam and to ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the local farmers.

(e) Keeping in view the current utilization of storage capacity, it has been decided that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will take up construction of new godowns only in the North-Eastern States including Sikkim and Jammu & Kashmir from 2005-06 onwards. The Government will also provide funds to the State Government of North Eastern Regions and J&K in the form of Grants-in-aid for creation of storage capacity for storage of foodgrains.

During the year 2005-06, the Government has allocated a total of Rs.4.64 crores (Revised Estimate) for the construction of foodgrains storage godowns in North Eastern Region. A physical target of 6240 MTs. has been fixed for creation of storage capacity in the region. Against this, till January, 2006, 2920 MTs. of storage capacity has been created in the North Eastern Region by the FCI.

For the year 2006-07, the Government has allocated Rs. 5.50 crores for the construction of foodgrains storage godowns by FCI in the North East. A physical target of 20,840 MTs has been fixed for creation of storage capacity in the region.